

Outlook for New College Grads

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Are you one of the 20,000 students in Utah graduating from college with a bachelor's degree this year? As you accept that diploma, you may breathe a sigh of relief that years of effort have finally ended. Now, the hard work of finding a job begins. Fortunately, you are entering one of the best Utah job markets in recent years. Strong job growth, low unemployment, and increased recruiting activity all signify a promising outlook for new college grads. Opportunities are improving for all new grads, and will be especially good for those with specific training and skills in demand.

With a current job growth rate of 4.4 percent, Utah currently far outpaces the U.S. average of 1.6 percent. Registering at 3.8 percent, Utah's unemployment rate is again approaching the low seen during the boom of the late '90s. With more jobs being created and fewer experienced workers looking for jobs, companies are increasingly willing to seriously consider hiring recent grads to fill these new positions. Many replacement job openings also exist due to retirements and turnover.

Area colleges report more job postings and increased employer participation at career fairs compared to recent years. They also report that employers particularly value internship and volunteer experience among competing job candidates, especially in industries such as health, business, engineering and communications.

While some majors teach you specific skills that are easily transferable to the job market (engineering and nursing come to mind), others may provide you with skills that make your employment options less clear. Not sure what your major qualifies you to do? Don't shortchange yourself, though. You learned a lot during those four years in addition to your book knowledge. Many employers are looking for the soft skills that come with a college degree, such as the ability to meet deadlines, learn new things, get along with coworkers, etc. If you are enthusiastic and can learn quickly, they may be willing to train you in the more technical aspects of the job. To market yourself effectively, you will need to know your skills, use college placement resources and be ready to sell yourself to employers. And while this may sound like another corporate cliché, don't be afraid to think outside the box and consider a variety of job options.

While all college grads benefit from an improving job market, those with highly sought-after majors and skills will be able to capitalize on heavy demand for certain occupations. According to Utah's most recent job vacancy study, the jobs requiring a bachelor's degree that are hardest to fill include: medical lab technologists, industrial engineers, and civil engineers. Computer-related occupations such as programmers, systems analysts, and software engineers have many openings, along with accountants, technical sales reps, and registered nurses.

For more information, please visit our website at www.jobs.utah.gov. Congratulations, and good luck finding that perfect job.

Selected Bachelor's Degree Occupations with Most New Openings

